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A VEXED QUESTION.

AN Englishman connected with the business of gas-lighting had to go to Paris, in order to help in establishing a company there of the same nature as that with which he was connected in England. Paris being a novelty to him, one of his friends, on his return, put some of those general questions which people are apt to ask of those who have been seeing strange places. 'How did you like Paris?'—'What did you think of the French?' and so forth. He hesitated dislike. 'A strange set over there—will never do at all, sir. Why, they are all wrong in their hours. Would you believe it? a vast number of them go to bed as early as half-past nine in the evening!' &c.

The morals of the French were deficient in one point—they did not observe those late hours which conduce to the consumption of gas. We have no doubt that our gas official was quite sincere in feeling and expressing this sense of delinquency. It is like what twenty persons will be heard saying every morning regarding their own professions. We once knew a professor of dancing, who always spoke of any deficiency in that branch of education with a degree of horror such as would hardly have been inspired in anybody else by an inability to read and write. A certain music-mistress used, in like manner, to talk of the fact of any one coming to her for lessons as a kind of virtue; while it was evident that she could scarcely have felt more grieved by a young lady's elopement, than by her abandoning music in order to study German. Remembering these instances, we have often amused ourselves at evening-parties, by reflecting on what the Gunter of the night will be thinking of the company, as he superintends the handing out of the creams, ices, and sherbets. He must doubtless feel that some persons are ridiculously abstemious, as compared with others. Some evenings, as he prepares to go home with the *debris* of his feast, he must feel a glow of approbation regarding the totality of guests—hunger tolerable, thirst respectable. When a good tart goes home unbroken, he will feel as if merit had been slighted. When unusual justice, however, has been done to one thing, it will compensate for the neglect of another; and thus he may acknowledge that the company, on the whole, has done its duty.

An amusing example of judgment on professional grounds is supplied by the northern part of the island. Somewhere in the eastern part of the county of Fife, a coursing club, composed chiefly of elderly gentlemen, used to meet once a week in the season for their favourite sport, and conclude with a dinner in the inn. An old hare, which seemed to be the last of its race in the

district, was usually roused, and, after a pretty fair run, always contrived to get through a hole in a wall, and so escape. This went on for some time, to the perfect contentment of the club; but at length an unlucky weaver, in sheer wantonness, stopped up the hole in the wall; so that the hare was killed. The club, failing thereafter to find another hare, soon fell off, and finally ceased to exist. The innkeeper felt the event deeply, and several years after, when some one, who had been long absent from the country, inquired after the weaver, he answered with a bitter grin: 'He's dead, man, and his saul kens to-day whether the hare o' Bickersty got fair play or no!' It is perfectly evident that the weaver might have murdered one of his own children, and met with a more lenient condemnation in that particular quarter.

The story reminds us of another which is told in one of Captain Grose's facetious essays. The captain had gone down for a few days to a sporting part of the country. In the society of the gentlemen of the district, he found a general friendliness and good-humour, excepting only so far as a particular person was concerned. Grose met this gentleman several times, and found him an unusually intelligent and agreeable person. Why was he so shunned and frowned at? he asked in various quarters, but for some time could get nothing in reply but mysterious looks and gestures, such as would be used regarding a person who had committed some atrocious but unpunishable offence. At length, the gentleman with whom he lived was induced, under great entreaty, to come out with the awful secret. 'Oh, a horrible fellow! The fact is, he is believed to have once killed a fox!' The interdicted gentleman was merely a person who had spoiled sport.

Captain Maconochie, in his writings respecting the Australian convicts, speaks of 'a peculiar tyranny of public opinion' among them, influencing even their ordinary language. A 'good man' is, with them, one who will not divulge an offence; a 'rogue' is one who will. We learn from another writer on the same subject, that, in the conventional slang of these unhappy wretches, one who obeys the rules in a way calculated to content the superintending powers, is commonly called a 'bad man;' while the opposite term is applied to one who is always ready to break through regulations. It is when hope has entirely left the breast of the convict, that he exclaims, with Milton's Satan: 'Evil, be thou my good.' But the basis of the judgment is, after all, his sense of how the matter affects himself. Taking a pleasure in thwarting the authorities, he approves of all that is done in that way. Equally pained at seeing them obeyed, he feels obedience to be an evil, and denounces it as such.

The people of England, having no capital invested in slaves, nor any branch of industry dependent on such aid, are at full liberty to see slavery in its true light of an unjustifiable interference with natural rights. But very different is it with the unfortunate gentleman of the 'southern states,' who happens to be in exactly the contrary circumstances. To him, the most pressingly offensive breach of the moral law is doing anything that can render his slaves more dangerous as a possession. To teach them the alphabet is a misdemeanour; to address them on their wrongs would be an offence like that of the Gunpowder conspirators. Even to help them in their flight must appear as a dire, unbrotherly act. When a citizen of Charleston hears of the Abolitionists of Boston having been unable to get a hall for one of their meetings, he smiles grimly, with the same feeling as that with which Edward I. would hear of the taking of Wallace, or a Roundhead colonel see Charles led to Westminster Hall. We may well believe that a clergyman of the south would lose no more in the respect of his flock by giving up one-half his orthodoxy, than by beginning to doubt that slavery is sanctioned by Scripture. Equally assured may we be, that for a white man in any part of the great Republic to put himself in any manner on a level with a black, be he bondman or free, would peril his standing in society considerably more than almost any simple immorality he could commit.

Our judgments of men are, in like manner, affected by every relation in which they can stand towards us. How different the feeling towards Mr Kossuth of an Austrian, who dreads his power of troubling and overturning, from that of an English patriot, who beholds in him the martyr of a great principle in which the good of millions was aimed at! Need we do more than recall how differently the busy Jesuit is liable to be regarded in Italy and in Lanarkshire! Sir Robert Peel is spoken of by millions as their greatest benefactor; but we have heard a country gentleman declare, with eyes flashing and nostrils distended, that he regarded him as worthy of being hanged. It is much to be feared, regarding many of the liberal party throughout the first years of the French war, that the want of the power of stringing up a few of them by way of a lesson to the rest, was matter of serious regret to not a small number of their opponents. In short, the greatest patriot that ever bled for his country, the most pure-souled martyr of the faith, the most single-hearted of philosophers, each and all have been put under ban by some party which felt that their aspirations and teachings were not convenient.

An important lesson may be laughingly taught. These anecdotes and remarks, trivial as they are, help to illustrate one of the greatest questions that has yet been debated amongst the thinking part of mankind. What is the foundation of our ideas of morality? One party, as is well known, argues for there being in us all a moral sense which guides us as to right and wrong; so that right and wrong are to be considered as absolute things in the world, not to be changed with times and seasons, or to be in any degree obedient to our ideas of accidental conveniency. Another party concludes that right and wrong are arbitrary things, respecting which we are guided merely by our judgment of their conveniency or inconveniency, their effect in giving pleasure or pain; and by this party everything like a moral sense is dispensed with. The 'observed ten-

dency of actions in the external world,' is by them set forth as the real basis of morality. Not the tendency of each man's actions regarding himself individually, but the tendency of the actions with respect to the general happiness. It is remarkable of the two views of this question, that keenly intellectual men have generally felt that there was something incomplete or unsatisfactory in the former; while the more emotional class of men, including those who are under strong religious feelings, manifest an insuperable repugnance to the latter.

It seems to us that there is a certain amount of truth in both views, but that both are alike imperfect, and we can attain satisfaction on this great question only when we combine the two. That our ideas as to what is right and what is wrong are arbitrary, and that we judge of them by their effect on the happiness of society, is, we think, not to be denied. We find ourselves approving and disapproving on this ground every hour of the day. All codes of morals and of laws are founded on such views of what was expedient for the general good as the intelligence of the time and place could supply. It is but a rude primitive impulse of this kind which creates the selfish judgments of which we have adduced a few ludicrous examples; and it is only when our views expand from the personal to the social circle, that we can be said to form a true conception of what is right and wrong in the sense of the moralist and the lawgiver. Well, all this is true—so far. But, after we have attained to this perception of what is good and bad in our individual actions towards our fellow-creatures, there is still something required—namely, a disposition to regulate our actions accordingly. Here is the deficiency of the utilitarians. When we advance to the idea, that there are faculties implanted in our nature by its Author giving us an inclination to do what we know or suppose will be for the general good, although it may not always appear to be immediately for our own special benefit, and guarding us from any trespass on our neighbours for the sake of some immediate apparent benefit to ourselves, then we approach something like a complete system. Here, we think, and not in reason, is the more particularly divine element of morality. It is, in reality, the moral sense argued for by so large and respectable a party; the golden chain binding us to the divinity which we have to thank for all good. It may even be said, that the absolute right and wrong of the same party is not incompatible with this eclectic view; for, though the ideas of right and wrong arrived at must be liable to modification under different circumstances, it may be admitted that, to act according to them, whatever they are, will always be right, and to oppose or neglect them always wrong, the one course of action being a fulfilment of the good designs of Providence, and the other not. Nor is there necessarily any objection to be taken on the ground of conventionality; for grant that it is conventional to forbid lying and theft, or to approve of justice and mercy, have not these weighty matters been regarded exactly as they are now ever since the beginning, so far as human intelligence allowed their effects to be estimated? And does not every local or temporary morality—as, for instance, that regarding slaves in Virginia—merge in some more cosmopolitan and permanent judgment, which corrects it, and puts it into its true place? No; all true maxims have as absolute a character as can be desired, when once human intelligence has brought its full light to bear upon them, and their true connection with the supernal fountain of goodness is seen.

It would thus appear, that there is truth on both

sides of this great question, and that each errs only when it rejects the truth that is in the other; not at all an uncommon fact regarding questions which keep mankind in perennial hot water.

CURIOSITIES OF OUR PARISH.

THE parish to which the present article refers, is not a very enlightened one, nor is there much prospect of its ever becoming so; for though the schoolmaster is abroad in it, he is so very much abroad, or rather the population lies so wide apart from him, that a great number, supposed to be benefited by his services, are as good as quite unknown to him. Within the memory of the oldest inhabitant, this has always been the case; and it promises to remain the case from the present date onwards to the dawn of doomsday. The truth is, the parish is somewhat slow and stationary. There has scarcely a new idea come into it since the time of Cromwell's wars. Downward from that period, however, there have always been parochial scribes, who have chronicled its goings-on, and kept some account of the expenditure of its finances. It has lately been our privilege to get a glimpse of some of its vestry records; and as we have found in them a good many particulars, at once curious in themselves, and, to a certain extent, illustrative of the proceedings of the parish in the olden times, we are about to bring a few of them together, for the amusement of such readers as may be disposed to look at them. We presume that if they serve to shadow forth any of the forgotten features of English life in one out-of-the-way corner of the kingdom, they will also indicate something of the former state of things in all similar localities, and may thus afford us some trivial insight into what we may term the byways of history.

The first extract we fall in with that seems any way suggestive, is an entry from the constable's accounts for 1643. From this we learn, that the said constable 'expended, with the constables of Wainfleet,' a certain sum of parish money, when he 'went to see what Coronall Cromwell was doing.' Our parish seems to have been in the Parliamentary interest; and accordingly, in an expedition to gain intelligence of the leader's movements, drink-money for the messenger and his informants was a thing to be ungrudgingly allowed. The parish was active in assisting Colonel Cromwell, and had to suffer sometimes, in its officers and otherwise, for its services in the popular interest. The constable mentions, as an instance, that 'certain provisions, which was sent to Bullingbrooke Castle,' were 'taken away from me by the Cavilliers.' Of course, the constable charges the loss upon the parish, as he also does the following:—'Item, expended with the captains in the morning at Bullingbrooke before I went to Spilsbie, 2s.' At every turn and movement, our worthy parish functionary makes an excuse for drinking—charging his expenses, without the slightest dread of fault-finding, upon the funds of the vestry exchequer. This, we suppose, is proof enough that there were no teetotalers in those days. From what is next extracted, the specific rate of land-carriage during the civil wars may be proximately ascertained. A 'side of beafe' was bought at Spilsby for the use of the forces at Bolingbrooke; and our constable pays 'to Thos. Stephenson for carrying the said side of beafe to the castle from Spilsbie, 4d.' The distance is about five miles, and at that time perhaps the roads might be dangerous. We pass over various items, and come upon the following:—'Expended, Christopher Spooner and myself, with Quarter-master Howelt, and other neighbours of the towne, 2s. 6d.' Far better allowance than the paltry groat to Thos. Stephenson for carrying the 'beafe.' Better also than the rate of payment indicated in the next item: 'Pd. to Jno. Thorpe's wife for meate and drink for 6 souldiers

belonging to Capt^l. Bussee, 4s.' This, no doubt, was pretty liberal allowance; for, further on, we find a journey of two persons to Tattershall sessions (distance about thirty miles) set down at four shillings. A horse shod on the way appears to have cost a shilling.

The distance from our parish to the county town of Lincoln, is somewhere about forty miles, and people run there now-a-days in less than two hours. In 1643, the journey took our constable the greater part of three days. We find him stopping the 'first night at Spilsbie,' about eleven miles from his own parish church; and on the second night he stays at 'Bardney,' six or seven miles short of his destination; completing the remaining distance the third day. There are no means of judging whether he travelled in the fastest manner possible, but it is most likely that his rate of progress was about the average then customary.

Among the disbursements which have reference to the purely home business of the parish, we find a few such entries as these:—'21 July [the year is 1645]—Expended, when I went about the towne to summon the people to a sermon of thanksgiving, 8d.' . . . 'Given to a gentleman souldier which had a pass, 6d.' . . . 'Given to an Irishwoman, and 17 of her family, who was a ladies daughter, 1s. 6d.' . . . 'Given to a minister of the church, 2s. 6d.' . . . 'Given to the relief of the gypsies which lay in our towne from Saturday to Monday morn, 1s.' . . . 'For watching the said gypsies at the same tyme, 1s.'

Whoever desires to learn anything about the price of cattle in 1650, may be to some extent enlightened by the following:—'Item, Pd. to Xter Spooner for the bull which I bought for towne's use, L.1, 1s. 4d.' Such an animal, of even the poorest breed, could hardly be bought now for less than L.30. Every one knows that money has declined in value; but it is obvious, nevertheless, that the price of bovine stock has risen in far higher proportion. Bulls, moreover, have ceased to be corporate property, and are kept now by private persons. The parish accounts of modern times, accordingly, contain no such memorandum as the next: 'Pd. to Rd. Burnitt, for finding the towne's bull, 3d.' The bull of our parish must have been incessantly going astray, as entries like the last are continually occurring through a period of a hundred years. It may be presumed that he was pastured in the open fens, and so was at liberty to roam over many miles of country.

From a preceding paragraph, it will be seen that it was formerly a part of the duty of the parish-officers to dispense charity on behalf of the population. In 1651, and other subsequent years, we find several entries in our parish annals, having reference to the relief of persons whose condition had been affected by the national disturbances. We learn, for instance, that 'sixpence' was given 'to Elizabeth Baker and 2 children,' they 'being driven out of Ireland by the rebels,' and 'having a sufficient pass to travel into Suffolk to their friends.' Further on we read: 'Item, given in relief to two gentlewomen which had great losses in Ireland, by the consent of Christ. Spooner, 6d.' . . . 'Given in relief to a named soldier, his wife, and 2 children, which came by pass, 8d.' . . . 'Given in relief to Ann Wood, a minister's wife, by consent of the neighbours, who came with a pointed letter of request declaring the great losses her husband had in Ireland, 2s.' . . . 'Given in relief to an old minister, who came out of Ireland, 1s.' . . . 'Given to two gentlemen that was taken by the torkes [Turks], 1s.' . . . 'For meat, drink, lodging, and money, for 14 Egyptians [gipsies], 5s. 6d.' Entries such as these are very numerous, and extend over several years. In connection with them, we find a statement of the constable's expenses, when he 'carried the money which was collected for the distressed Protestants in Savoy.' He had to journey for about eight miles, and he spent the liberal sum of tenpence.

But while money was pretty freely dispensed in charity to distressed persons 'with a sufficient pass,' the parish vindicated its disapprobation of indiscriminate beggary, by dealing rather severely with unaccredited vagabonds. Witness the item which we next extract: 'Given to a man for whipping Jno. Sheppard, a vagrant, and for sending him to Wrangle [the next parish], and given to him 2d.—8d.' Sixpence for the whipping, and twopence in compassion to the victim: this was the manner in which the parish tempered justice with mercy in the year 1652. Two hundred years later, it has not much improved upon the discipline: it now sends occasional vagrants to the treadmill, without supplying them with the pecuniary solatium. Our records contain frequent memorandums of this whipping practice; but a single notice of it is probably enough for present purposes.

The wages of the parish scribe afford us a more interesting topic for considerations. They are several times set down in these terms:—'To Mr Clarke, for writing for me the whole year, 2s.' This seems rather shabby pay, when we contrast it with the following, which reminds one of the unscrupulous liberality of public functionaries in general concerning all matters relating directly to themselves:—'Expended at Jno. Thorpe's, when the overseers and church-wardens passed their accounts to this town, 8s.' Only think of that!—eight shillings for one night's tipping, and just one-fourth of that amount for a whole year's painful writing in the parish books! The constable's mare cost exactly the same sum *shoeing*. This we know from an item many years repeated:—'For my mare shoeing all the year, 2s.'

If anybody would like to know the price of bricks in 1658, and thereabouts, we can supply him with the requisite information. It stands in our records under that date:—'Pd. for 2000 bricks, 8s.' Four shillings a thousand, then, was the price in cash, and no apparent discount. They cost now from twelve to eighteen shillings a thousand making, without the raw material. Anybody expert in figures may calculate the difference at his leisure. For our part, we are in a hurry to make known to you what a 'widow's grave' cost making in the year when Charles II., of blessed memory, returned to rule over his admiring English subjects. We find that in our parish, in 1660—Richard Danderson and Jno. Dobson being overseers—there was 'Paid to Jas. Smyth for making a widow's grave, L.0, 0s. 9d.' You will say there has been a great rise of wages since the year of the Restoration. But we would not have you form an opinion about the matter too hastily. In that same year, our authorities expended money in getting a piece of work executed, which does not strike us as being by any means inordinately cheap. The account of it runs thus:—'Pd. to the painter for painting the king's arms, L.3, 1s. 0d.' We have reason to believe that this was a shabby daub by some bungling house-painter; for twenty-five years later, the 'arms' were repainted at a cost of L.8. It will be understood, that during the Commonwealth and the Protectorate, the king's arms had been defaced from all the churches; and we have here an intimation of the manner in which they were restored on the king's return. In 1670, we find our parish expending L.2, 7s. 10d., 'for drums and trumpets'; but for what specific purpose we cannot ascertain. In the same year occurs this extraordinary entry:—'Given to an honest fellow, 4d.'

The ancient practice of perambulating the parish boundaries was very religiously observed by our parish ancestors. We have met with many notices of it in the records here before us, most of which run pretty much in this way:—'Spent with the ringers when we went pambulation, 7s. 6d.' The scribe's orthography is not exactly accurate; but if he made the entry the same evening, he may be charitably conceived to have been suffering from some slight confusion of the head, owing

to the strong drink which he probably assisted in imbibing. Another scribe, some few years later, is still worse up in the art of spelling, as he writes the word indifferently 'hambulation' and 'pambulation.' 'Expended going hambulation at Yarbore, 10s.' . . . 'Spent the day they went pambulation, 3s. 2d.' The next item of the sort shews some little improvement. It belongs to the year 1684, and stands thus:—'Expended at going pambulation, 7s.' Under a later date, we find it spelt 'preambution'; but in no case have we met with it written according to modern usage. As near as we can gather from our records, the perambulating ceremony was performed once in six or seven years; and we find that, on every occasion, there was something spent in commemoration of it at Jno. Thorpe's, or some other hostelry.

Now we are citing a few specimens of eccentric orthography, we think it would be a pity to miss the following:—'Feb. 6 [1686]—Given to 2 disbanded souldiers by pass from the Lord Mare of London, 8d.' . . . 'Paid Mr Jno. Gooderick for a poule for the Dogg Bridge Leaner, 1s. 6d.' If this be unintelligible to any reader, we beg to inform him that 'poule' means simply a pole, and that the 'Leaner' signifies a rail stretched across a ditch for the hand to rest on when people walk along the plank, which is locally called a 'brigg' or bridge. 'Paid for a chaldre of coles for the engine, 18s. [1694]. Two years later, the price had risen one-third higher, Jno. Godrick being then paid 'for a chaldre of coles for engine, L.1, 4s. 0d.' They appear to have been fetched from a small town four miles off, and were conveyed on horseback—that being the only practicable method of conveyance in the winter, owing to the badness of the roads. The next extract is rather striking:—'Pd. to Paul Thewk, for writing the commandments and varnishing the *pillows*, L.4, 10s.' Of course, it will be seen that the scribe means *pillars*. These curiosities of spelling might be multiplied without limit, but perhaps we have quoted enough to illustrate the nature of them.

Among the entries of historical interest, the following, which belongs to the year 1695, is noticeable: 'Spent on the ringers when the king came home and on 5th Novr., 9s. 6d.' This also is significant, and refers to the same year: 'Spent when I went to Wainfleet about the papists, L.0, 0s. 9d.'—rather a moderate expenditure, considering the excitement of the occasion. The next, perhaps, has no strict historical interest, except that it shews how our ancestors spoke their minds in the parish-books:—'Given to a captain and his wife, and another rogue that cheated us, 2s.' This being 'cheated' would seem to have made the officers unusually parsimonious; for when, some time after, there came to them 'a minister begging,' they gave him only sixpence. The home poor, however, appear to have been wonderfully accommodated; take, as an instance, this: 'Pd. for hay for Widow Brough and George Mitchell, and leading into their yards, L.5, 5s. [1698.] Those surely must have been the good old times! The case is not at all exceptional—there being for a series of years frequent entries, not only for cow-provender, but also for the purchase of actual cows, for numerous poor people. As an offset to this parochial philanthropy, however, we have fallen upon the following:—'Expended when the townsmen whipped old Bess, 6s. 8d. For whipping her, 6d.' Old Bess was probably a witch: the date of her whipping is the year 1699. About the same time, we find that our parish notables began occasionally to whip the gipsies, unless they chanced to have a pass signed by magistrates.

From what may be called incidental statistics, of which our records contain a sprinkling, we select the following, as being likely to throw a little light on the former state of prices, and as being otherwise characteristic of the olden times. We find that, in 1692, the parish paid for a 'paire of lethren breeches for B-

Bougham, 1s. 8d.' The year after, they paid sixpence 'to Wm. Laurence for a badger-skin;' and 12s. 6d. to somebody for a new Common Prayer-book. William Everington was paid 'for cloth and clothes for Jas. Brown—twining cloth for shirt, and a new hat, L.1, 13s. 3d.' At a pauper's funeral in 1687, the expenditure was as follows:—'To 9 doz. bread, 9s.; 9 gals. ale, 9s.; a coffin, 6s.; flannell, 5s.; for a certificate for burieing in woolen, 10s.' It cannot be said that there was anything lavish in the coffin or the flannel, but the cost for bread and ale does seem in preposterous proportion—something like the 'intolerable deal of sack' one remembers in Falstaff's tavern-bill. It was not for funerals only that the parish made provision; they likewise took charge of some of the parishioners' weddings. Whenever a poor girl had 'forgot herself,' and gave promise of being prematurely involved in the responsibilities of maternity, the parochial officials appear to have taken care to get her lawfully joined in wedlock with her betrayer, and to have liberally provided for the celebration of the nuptials. In 1726, a compulsory marriage of this description was effected, the cost of which is thus set forth in the parish accounts: 'Pd. to Philip Swaby for bread and cooking at Jno. Graves wedding, 4s.; Wm. Smedby, 2 lbs. of butter for Graves wedding, 8d.; given to Jno. Graves at y^e wedding, 5s.; his wife a hat, 9d.; beef and mutton at his wedding, 9s.' There is nothing put down distinctly under the head of drink-money; but as it is incredible to suppose there was no drink consumed, we are disposed to suspect that a formidable item which stands in immediate connection, is the specific bill for potent liquors. Just under the charge for beef and mutton, we read: 'Bryan Meads, as pr bill, L.3, 18s. 9d.' And when we consider that probably the whole parish was at the wedding, the amount will hardly seem larger than what might be reasonably required to make everybody nicely drunk. This, however, is only a conjecture, and in regard to it we leave the reader to frame his own hypothesis.

As an instance of the unexpected turn which these extraordinary weddings would sometimes take, we here relate an anecdote with which the oldest inhabitant has supplied us. Once upon a time—not very far back in the traditions of the parish—the constable had been despatched to bring some backward Lothario to the altar; and while on his way with him to the church, he was rather curiously outwitted. The man had been captured, and was riding behind the constable on his mare; and on another horse the overseer was following with the prospective bride—a rabble of excited rustics running after them to see the fun; when, just as the procession was passing a plantation, the unconscionable bridegroom slyly slipped himself down over the horse's tail, and, jumping into the wood, escaped across the country, and from that day to the present has never more been heard of! The poor damsel was left to walk home again unmarried; and, after a slight effort to trace the fugitive, the constable and his associates turned into the public-house, and enjoyed themselves over the good things which had been provided for the marriage-dinner.

In reading of particular events in history, one is apt to wonder how they affected the ongoings of the far-away provincial people. At present, in remote places, such things as create sensation in the metropolis and large towns generally, often pass utterly unnoticed, and without the slightest commemoration. From the records of our parish, this would not seem to have been formerly the case. We find there was 'expended on Queen Ann's coronation-day, in ale and powder, 10s.:' but the parish has so degenerated in loyalty, that, on the coronation of her present Majesty, it made no public rejoicing whatsoever, and took no recognition of the event. Since cock-fighting went out among them, our inhabitants have allowed themselves no holidays or

recreations. Formerly, there were things of the sort frequently occurring. There is record of a public rejoicing in 1713, which seems to have been rather a grand affair. There was 'pd. to Jno. Pauger for 20 lbs. of powder, L.1, 9s. 0d.:' a whole sheep was roasted—cost 15s.; and a gratuity of 1s. was made 'to Silvester Aublin for setting the table and taking it up again.' This table must have been set somewhere in the open air, and the whole parish no doubt sat down to it in a body.

The short space we have now left to us may be suitably occupied by a few miscellaneous curiosities. Under the date of 1702, there is this: 'To y^e mountebank for y^e cuering of Widow Brough of a paine in her side, 8s.' The most notable entry of the succeeding year is: 'For lodging a vagabond and whipping him, 1s. 4d.' The dates of the following range over the next thirty years:—'Pd. to Mr Isack Allam for surgoning Jas. Smith and his wife and Widow Plant, L.3.' 'Pd. to Mr Hallam for $\frac{1}{2}$ of the cure of Jas. Smith, L.3, 0s. 3d.' 'Given for whipping y^e geeseys that was taken up in our parish, 1s.' 'Spent myself and my horse when I went before Captain Brian, 1s. 6d.' 'Spent when towne barnes [bairns] was put out, 2s. 10d.' 'To Jno. Gooderson for whipping dogs, 6s. 8d.' This was probably a year's salary for keeping the church cleared of those intruders during service-time. 'Expended when the bull was baited, 7s. 6d.' 'Given to Pearson for catching 2 foxes, 2s.' 'For powder and shot for shooting owls at church, 1s.' There are also frequent charges for 'shooting jacksdaws,' the amounts ranging from three to six shillings. The next is an item also many times occurring: 'For towne's bull shewing, 3s.' The cost of this exhibition would seem to have varied a good deal, for it is sometimes set down at as much as half-a-sovereign. Our last extract is one having reference to the periodical perambulation, which in 1739 had come to be called by a slightly different name: 'Pd. Mr Fox for ale at rambling-day, 12s.' And with this, good reader, ends our pickings from our old-fashioned parish records. If the particulars we have gathered should not be deemed expressly edifying, they may perhaps afford to some an innocent amusement; and in that case, our rather laborious rummagings will not be without result.

THE SPIRIT-CALLERS OF BERLIN.

In my college-days, which were passed at the university of Berlin, I had a class-fellow, whom, for the present, we will call Heinrich, as that was his Christian name. His father was a Prussian nobleman, his mother, a French lady of equal rank, whose family had fled from the first Revolution; and by both parents he was connected with some of the best houses in Paris and Berlin. Moreover, Heinrich was an only son, and the heir of large estates in Silesia. Handsome, lively, and clever, all that fortune and parental fondness could do to spoil him had been tried from his infancy with wonderfully small success. Heinrich was a little vain, and a little self-sufficient; but he was an honourable young man, a gay, kindly companion, and a rather promising student. My class-fellow was in high request at the university. His wit and spirit made him equally eligible as the leader in a frolic, or the second in a duel: such occurrences did take place at times among us—though student-life is somewhat better regulated in the well-policed city of Berlin than in most of our university towns—and Heinrich always came off handsomely; but some remarked that the young man's strength was not so great as his courage; his mind did not readily recover its balance after any

shock; and he had inherited a delicate constitution, with a fair and fine complexion, from his father. Heinrich had a cousin Rupert, who was some years older, the son of a baron, and a major in the Prussian army. His resemblance to my class-fellow was remarkable; but he was of larger proportions, and of a stronger type. Not less clever or social than his cousin, Rupert was far less liked, for his gaiety was dissipation, and his wit, sarcasm. I do not believe it was jealousy of Rupert's influence that made me think him an unsafe companion for Heinrich; the latter and I were intimate acquaintances, but could not be called friends. Out of college, we did not move in the same circle—I was not a baron's son—but the dashing major spent at least one half of his time on leave of absence at the house of Heinrich's father, a great mansion in Friedrichstadt. Within its walls, every mode of killing time, from quadrilles to card-tables, was in continual practice. Berlin at large talked of its Wednesday receptions and Saturday balls, at which Rupert shone conspicuous in ladies' sight; though he was also occasionally found in the café, the theatre, and, it was said, more questionable quarters. Too sensible not to perceive the moral deficiencies of his character, Heinrich did not esteem him his cousin; but in common with most of their acquaintances, he half admired, and was half amused by Rupert, quoted his satirical sayings, and laughed over his city adventures.

It was my second season at college, and expected to be a gay winter in Berlin, for a royal marriage was on the tapis; but at one of its first balls Rupert led a pretty *fräulein* out to dance from beside a general's plain daughter, and next morning received orders to join his regiment in Breslau without delay. Before his departure could be fairly discussed in the realm of fashion, a more extraordinary subject demanded its attention. In a street behind the church of St Nicholas, believed to have been built in the time of Albert the Bear, and sacred to the residence of wealthy Jews and Poles, two women, who came from nobody knew where, established themselves in a house which formed part of a Benedictine convent, suppressed in the seventeenth century as a hold of witchcraft.

The rest of the building had been long ago burned down by an accidental fire, and a Jew's warehouse erected on its site. The dwelling had held many tenants since then, but tradition reported them all to have been unlucky. The last occupant was a Bohemian mirror-maker, named Gortz, whose glasses, false or true, were said to have no rivals, even in Paris, although he worked in a primitive solitary fashion, and hanged himself one night in his own shop; whether from overmuch brandy, or unregarded love, the neighbours were not certain. After that, the price of his mirrors rose immensely. He had left none in the shop, and some secret in mirror-making was believed to have died with him.

The house had been deserted for thirteen years when the new inhabitants came. The landlord said they had named the Russian ambassador for reference. The neighbours remarked that they brought but one old servant, and little luggage; but rumour soon began to tell strange things of them. First, it was said they were wonderful fortune-tellers; then, that they cured diseases by some unknown drops; and at length it was whispered, that they practised the long-lost art of the classic necromanteia, which summoned back departed spirits to commune with the living. I have often remarked,

that some forms of quackery flourish best in the upper, and some in the lower strata of society. In general, this seems to depend on their nature. Anybody's pill or balsam will be profitable among the working-classes; while more spiritual pretensions, especially if mysterious enough, are quite as certain to succeed with their superiors. Casualties, which enter so largely into all human affairs, must be reckoned on, too, in such cases. That street, though antiquated and narrow—though far from the court-quarter, and devoted to Poles and Jews, belonged to a once fashionable neighbourhood, and fag-ends of fashion were still about it. People went there to hire costumes for mask-balls, to buy unlicensed books, and to obtain amazing bargains of French goods that never passed the custom-house. China of any age, and all manner of curiosities, could be bought there. Rare drugs were sold in the same shops, with no questions asked; and a Polish astrologer was among its residents. I know not how far these conveniences contributed to spread the new artists' fame among the rank and fashion of Berlin; but little else was talked of in their private circles, and the tales that oozed out had a strange mixture of the terrible and the ludicrous in them. For instance, it was said that the spirit invoked did not always attend; one not called for occasionally came in its room: neither were the apparitions always distinct, though many swore to having seen their departed friends. Sometimes a column of gray smoke, sometimes a long and shapeless shadow, and sometimes a moving skeleton, appeared; but revelations were generally made which left no doubt on the hearer's mind. Thus an old baroness, who had been twice a widow, and three times at the hymeneal altar, was unexpectedly reminded by her first husband of matters concerning which the world, and himself in particular, were believed to be ignorant; the head of a noble family was admonished by a companion of his wild youth, to restore 10,000 thalers won by false cards; and a foreign ambassador was told of intercepted letters, and a minister ruined in consequence, by a secretary who had died in his service seventeen years before.

A craving curiosity regarding the world to which they are hastening as surely as the grains flow from the sand-glass, is natural to men everywhere; but I cannot help thinking, that a vein of native superstition runs through our German mind—at least we love to dabble in the mysterious. Nothing else could account for the numbers of Berlin's *beau monde* who visited the old house in Margravestrauss, behind the church of St Nicholas. Gradually, the subject extended to all ranks: artisans talked of it in their workshops, families round their hearths, and literary circles at their æsthetic conversations. Everybody was interested, and the greater part frightened—but people like that. Mourners went there to see their lost ones more, and doubting minds to inquire into the secrets of the grave. I heard of a cabinet-maker who went to question his old master regarding the components of a certain varnish; and of a servant-maid, who sought her grandmother's advice which of two lovers she should choose for a husband. There are in every population masses of minds too shallow to receive a serious impression from anything. Hundreds of this description said they had seen Brother Karl or Sister Martha, who advised them to attend church regularly, and lead honest lives, with commands to pay certain debts, and advices how to invest their savings. Whether deceived or not, these good people would have been as much impressed by the Friday's market; but on others little removed from them, strange effects were

produced. A gay widow in Louisestadt, whose jointure was large, and mind somewhat light, after a visit—paid for what purpose I never learned—retired, with all her riches, to the Carmelite convent, becoming at once a Catholic and the strictest nun in that establishment; but the story which amazed all Berlin most was that of the old landgrave Smesel, a rich man, and a confirmed miser. On some information obtained from his grandfather, whom he consulted regarding a bag of groschens the latter had buried in East Prussia at the time of the Cossack invasion, Smesel sent for his only living relative, a sober, trusty clerk in the Berlin post-office, and made him a present of 5000 thalers in the Prussian Bank. The clerk's good-fortune was a subject of general satisfaction. His habitual civility and consideration for the public, made Ernest Smesel much more popular than government officers are wont to be among us, and with the post-office authorities he stood in high confidence from the prudent, punctual service of almost twenty years. Ernest was not young, but he had never married; neither had his aunt, who brought him up on her own slender portion, for his mother had died early, and his father, an ensign in the Prussian army, had fallen, with his colours in hand, at the battle of Leipzig. Frau Adelaide, as they called her, was his mother's sister. The story went, that she was the last descendant of one of the noblest families in Strasburg—that her ancestors had owned castles and lordships on the Lower Rhine; but all were lost long ago through war and wasteful heirs, except some old farmhouses and fields, which Frau Adelaide had disposed of, for a small annuity, to the convent of St Therese in her native town, where it was said she had been educated. Both aunt and nephew attended the Lutheran church in which my family worshipped. I remember him as a staid, respectable man, who looked as if all within had grown old before the time; and her as a tall lady always in black, with an immovable face, and the stiff but stately carriage peculiar to our old-fashioned nobility. They lived, in sober comfort, in one of the retired but respectable streets of Berlin Proper. The landgrave's present made no perceptible addition to their style or equipments. More wonderful still, it did not break old Smesel's heart; neither did he want the thalers back, as some anticipated; but, from the day of that donation, the landgrave kept an untrusting watch on his relative's expenditure.

Meantime, the spirits continued to be called for, and marvellous stories multiplied. Strange to say, although all this occurred in Prussia, the police did not interfere—perhaps the government thought ghosts might help to keep people out of politics; but the clergy from most of their pulpits denounced the invokers as agents of Satan. Nobody but the old *frans* minded that; yet it proved the signal for noble and plebeian, sage and simple in Berlin, to range themselves in two opposing parties, one of whom believed in the old house and its inhabitants to the uttermost, while the other questioned, reasoned, and tried to laugh them down.

I was young then, and warm on the latter side, for the division extended to the university. Heinrich was, if possible, more ardent than I: he argued, wagered, and asserted that it was imposture. Somehow, no one cared to fight on the subject, or my class-fellow might have had some duels on his hands; but the zeal with which both disputed the question at our debating society, naturally drew Heinrich and me more closely together. Most of the members had become converts, but our principal antagonist was a lank laborious student from the Polish, or rather Russian frontier, named l'eternmann, and remarkable for nothing at college but the cold-blooded tenacity with which he stuck to his point. Petermann said the dead might return, and those people might know how to call them; and from that position neither reason nor ridicule could drive him.

One evening, as our society was breaking up after

a stormy debate, in which every soul had lost his temper but Petermann, I heard him say to Heinrich, with one of his frosty smiles: 'It is a wonder, myn-heer, that you don't test the thing by asking them to call up one of your noble friends or relations: there must be some of them dead.'

'There are,' said Heinrich haughtily. 'But I consider it beneath a gentleman to countenance imposture so far.'

'You could bring home the proof, though,' cried Petermann after him as he bade me good-night, and walked quickly away.

Our next meeting-night was Monday; but for days I observed that there was something on Heinrich's mind; and as I sat in my own room on Friday evening, reading Humboldt's first lecture, some one tapped at the door, and in stepped my class-fellow, dressed like a common artisan, with a rough bundle under his arm.

'Hermann,' said he, 'I want you to go with me: here is your masquerade costume.'

'Where, Heinrich?' said I.

'To the old house in Margravestrauss,' he answered. 'I believe it was Petermann who made me think of it first; but I have got a famous test for the spirit-callers. In this trim, nobody will recognise us. I shall play the heart-stricken mourner; you will be my comforter. We are both house-carpenters of course, and our errand will be to see the spirit of Rupert, my hard-hearted brother, who rose to be a major in the French war, but disowned me, and died of a rapid decline. How my cousin, the living Rupert, will laugh when he hears the story! and shan't we have sport publishing it at the society's next meeting? That will open the believers' eyes!'

I thought the jest a capital one, as well as Heinrich. In a few minutes the dress was on, and we were on our way, Heinrich having provided himself with a small but very accurate likeness of Rupert from his mother's drawing-room, and some ten thalers, which were generally known to be requisites. It was mid-winter, and a clear keen frost made the pavement of Berlin—by the way, not the best in the world—ring under our feet like iron. The clock of St Nicholas chimed eight as we reached the Margravestrauss. They kept old-fashioned German hours in that neighbourhood. Shop and warehouse were long closed, and there was not a passenger to be seen. The old house seemed in utter darkness; but at our first summons, the door was opened by the servant, taper in hand. She was a stout, middle-sized woman, with dark-gray hair, and a look approaching stupidity in its staidness. There was, moreover, about her something that reminded me, I know not how, of a solid square.

On saying we came to consult her ladies—such was the formula—she ushered us through a corridor into a back-parlour with three doors and the commonest of furniture, except a magnificent lamp which burned on the table. We had scarcely time to take these notes, when the spirit-callers entered by different doors. They were on the wrong side of forty—how far, I cannot tell; but the gray had made considerable progress, and there was no attempt at disguise. Each had the remains of beauty, but of a different order. The one had been an extreme blonde, and the other an ultra brunette. There was certainly no relationship in their faces; but both were tall spare women, whose attire, though neither odd nor old-fashioned, was of dingy colours, and carelessly put on; and whose look was at once haggard and singular, as if life had not gone with them after a common or easy fashion. I am thus particular in appearances, because they were stamped on my memory by after-events. The ladies received us with grave politeness, and my friend unfolded his tale. I never thought that Heinrich could tell a falsehood so well; but when he had finished, the dark lady inquired: 'Are you quite sure your brother is dead?'

'Certain,' said Heinrich with a well-affected sob. 'I saw the curé who consoled his last moments, and have worn crape for him.'

'And is your courage sufficient to meet a departed spirit, young man?'

'O yes,' said Heinrich; 'I think I could stand it.'

'Then I can call to-day, for my planet has power; but there are some points on which it is necessary to warn you;' and like a perfect mistress of her subject, the lady proceeded with a long instructive discourse, of which I only recollect that it treated familiarly of departed spirits, their comings and goings; of occult laws and magnetic sympathies; of herbs, amulets, and the lost knowledge of the ancients, which herself and partner had discovered through fasts, vigils, and planetary influence. In short, every assumption, old and new, was jumbled up in that oration. It had, moreover, the sound of a daily service, and wound up with their benevolent anxiety to serve the less gifted of mankind. I noticed, however, that the lady spoke most excellent German, and was particularly accurate in historical dates and names. At the conclusion, she took Rupert's picture from my companion's hand; while the other, who had listened with apparent attention to every word, took a clasped book, not unlike a missal, from her pocket, and sat down to read by the lamp.

'One of us always reads prayers while the other is engaged in this work,' said the dark lady. 'Follow me.'

Trying to look as like frightened carpenters as possible, Heinrich and I followed through a door on the right, which closed seemingly of itself behind us, and we stood in a great gallery, in which there was no light but the wintry moon shining through a high and narrow window. In its gleam stood something like a small Roman altar, with a funeral urn and antique vase upon it.

'Now,' said our conductress, 'some spirits can come only before, and some after midnight. I know not to which order your brother belongs; but whatever you may hear or see, keep silence on your peril till I bid you speak.' Saying this, she took the vase and poured some liquid from it into the urn. It had a strong odour, but one unknown to me, though I had served two seasons in the college laboratory; and almost the same moment, with a low crackling noise, a steady blue flame shot up, which illumined the gallery for some distance. Its length, however, seemed interminable, the further end being lost in darkness. I felt certain there was no such space within the house. Our conductress placed Rupert's picture before the flame, bowed three times to the altar, and repeated, in a loud distinct voice, some words which sounded like a mixture of Latin and some old Eastern tongue. As she ceased, we heard an indescribable sound like a moaning under the floor, and then both plainly saw coming to us out of the darkness Heinrich's cousin, Rupert, in the uniform of his regiment, and looking so like life, that I could have sworn it was he. Bold as Heinrich had been, I felt his hand, which was clasped in mine, tremble as our conductress, with a look of malicious triumph which actually appalled me, said: 'Speak to your brother now in the name of the old faith.'

Heinrich did try to speak, but he could not; and before I could summon words, the shadow, stopping half-way from us, said, in a thin hollow voice, but I observed its lips never moved: 'Why do you trouble the dead? Haven't you heard that I was shot three days ago by Captain Muller, after winning his last thaler at the hazard-table? Go home, and lead a better life than I have done!' and it vanished utterly, as the flame on the altar flickered and went out.

In silence the lady opened the door, and in silence we left the parlour. Heinrich emptied his purse into the hand of the servant at the outer door—for the spirit-

callers did not take money themselves—and we were past the old church before either spoke a word.

'It is very strange, Hermann,' said Heinrich at last. 'I wish we had not gone.'

I wished the same heartily. A real terror had come over us both, and we talked seriously of how the thing might have been managed, trying to convince each other that it was a cheat; neither, however, was satisfied with his own arguments; and with a dreary feeling of having done something wrong and dangerous, we parted, agreeing to say nothing about it. Next morning, as I was stepping out to college, Heinrich's valet, Keiser, almost ran against me, and with a wild, frightened look, handing me an open letter, said: 'Read that, sir. The baron received it this morning. My master has been in a shocking fit ever since. There are two doctors with him, but he would not rest till I took the letter to you.'

The brief epistle made me stagger where I stood. It was from the colonel of Rupert's regiment, informing Heinrich's father, in stiff military terms, that his nephew had been assassinated on the evening of Tuesday, by Captain Muller, a desperate gamester, who coolly waited for the major, and shot him at the door of the gaming-house, in retaliation for his ill-luck at play. The letter bore a post-office mark, which indicated that it had been mis-sent to Baden; thus the intelligence was delayed, and Heinrich and I were ignorant of what had happened. In our intended frolic, we had actually broken the quiet of the dead, and talked with one from beyond the grave. My first impulse, on rallying from the shock, was, I know not why, to go and see Heinrich. I found the great house in consternation; but a stiff message from the baroness, informed me that her son could not be seen, as his physician had ordered absolute quiet. By subsequent inquiries, I learned that, in a sort of delirium which succeeded the convulsive fit into which the reading of that letter had thrown him, Heinrich uttered some wild words concerning the previous night's adventure. I think his family never fully ascertained the story; but an intimation from the Berlin police, doubtless owing to the baron's influence, made the spirit-callers withdraw quietly on the following night; and I knew that Heinrich's relations ever after had a special dislike to me.

My class-fellow I never saw again; perhaps his mind never recovered from that shock. The baroness travelled with him through Switzerland, France, and Italy, for change of scene; but those who saw him at Rome and Paris, said he walked and spoke like one in a dream. Nothing would satisfy him but retirement at the family-seat in Silesia, and there he died of a rapid consumption in the following autumn. The few fragments of the story that servants had sent abroad, were hushed up long before. It was remarked, that whoever concerned himself much about them, was sure to come somehow under the notice of the secret police. They seemed to take no note of me, but the events I have related made my college-days dull, and youth sober. I pursued my studies, however, and graduated with some honour. Petermann took his degree on the same day; but all the while we remained at college, I observed he rather avoided me, and once I saw him talking earnestly with Keiser at the corner of the street. The fellow had left his master three weeks after he brought that letter to me, and obtained service at the Russian Embassy. Petermann's degree was not fairly in his pocket, till he received a medical appointment in the same household; while I, at the recommendation of our college president, was selected from many candidates as travelling physician to a noble pair grievously afflicted with wealth, idleness, and imagination. In their service, years passed, and I made the tour of Europe; residing from one to six months at every considerable town; but through all the capital cities I traced, rather indeed

by accident than inquiry, the wonderful women of the old house in Margravestrass. In Rome, they had appeared in the character of miracle-workers; in Paris, they had told fortunes; at Vienna, they had been physicians; and the same occupation, together with the manufacture and sale of extraordinary drugs, was renewed at St Petersburg, where, however, they utterly disappeared soon after the Emperor Alexander's death. No clue to their previous story could I ever obtain, but that such a pair had once been novices at the convent of St Therese at Strasburg, being brought from Russia and placed there by the notable Madame von Krudener on her travels. Tales of their marvellous powers in all the capacities mentioned, met me, and, for aught I know, are yet to be heard in those great cities; but none seemed so well proved and established as that of my own experience.

I had been eight years in the service of my noble patrons, when it pleased them to take up their abode in the oldest and most dingy quarter of Strasburg; and, returning alone from the theatre one night, through a shabby but quiet street, my eye was caught by a tobaccoist's sign. Being just then in want of the German's indispensable, I stepped in; the dame behind the counter had a face known to my memory: it was the old house-servant. She knew me, too, and we gazed at each other for a minute. There was an impulse to say something in her look, but at that moment a soldier entered, who saluted her familiarly by the name of Gretchen, and inquired if she knew what had become of old Petermann's nephew who used to live over the way.

'He went home to his friends in Prussia,' said the woman coolly; 'then to college; and turned out a great doctor after that in St Petersburg.'

'Is he there now?' inquired the soldier.

'How should I know where great people go?' and she smiled as Petermann used to do.

I left the shop with my cigars, but an odd impulse drew me often to that neighbourhood—and whenever I passed, the woman was sure to look anxiously out, and then draw back, as if not yet determined that she had something to say to me. I couldn't get over that thought, and made two or three errands to the shop, but all in vain—the woman pretended not to recognise me. On the last occasion, it was very late, and I had reached the end of the street; there wasn't a soul in it but myself, when, without a sound of steps that I could hear, a hand was laid on my shoulder, and the woman's face thrust over. 'Doctor,' said she, in a husky whisper, 'I can't go to sleep this night without telling you it wasn't a ghost you and the young baron saw that night in the Margravestrass, but a shadow made with a picture in the Bohemian's glasses. It was I that spoke through a tube the nuns left in the floor. We knew you were coming. Take this home with you; I have kept it eleven years, and more,' she said, thrusting a crumpled paper into my hand; and before I could speak, the bang of her shop-door, closed up for the night, sounded through the street.

I read the paper in my own bedroom. It was, as nearly as I can recollect, a true copy of the colonel's letter to Heinrich's father; but there was no mark of mis-sending on it, and though in the same character, it was not like ordinary writing. It was long and late before I fell asleep, but my servant awoke me early in the morning with the report, that the countess was in hysterics from the sight of a fire which she saw on her return from the mayor's ball, consuming the house of a poor woman who kept a tobacco-shop, and had perished in the flames. The woman was Gretchen; and the only additional light ever thrown on that strange transaction was what a police-officer, to whom I rendered some medical service, told me at Berlin regarding the clerk Smessel. Some years before my return, he had died suddenly, and Frau Adelaide fell

into helpless imbecility. The house of course came under police superintendence; and in an out-of-the-way closet there was found copies of innumerable letters, seals of every variety, and a curious and most complete copying-machine.

AN ENGLISHMAN IN IRELAND.

YOUR late article on the Dublin Exhibition, and the prospects opening up for Ireland, cannot be read without gratification, as furnishing one more corroboration of the fact, that our friends across the Channel are really about to go ahead, if they are not doing so already. As in this posture of affairs, every item of observation on the country and its usages may be useful, I venture to intrude the following notes, the result of a late pretty extensive tour in Ireland. I propose to speak of only what I saw, and can vouch for.

The first thing that struck me in Ireland, was the treatment of the servants, and the abrupt and haughty way in which men, whom I knew to be good-natured and kind-hearted, spoke to their dependents, their servants, or even to the beggars in the streets. As for the latter, indeed, I was soon obliged to adopt the Irish custom in self-defence. To refuse a beggar civilly, is to confess your greenness, and to attach him to you permanently, or till you pay him for his absence.

In looking for a house in Dublin, when I inquired for the servants' bedrooms, instead of being taken into the garret, I was always led below into the basement, and was told that the servants' sleeping-place was there. 'There' was very often a dark, damp, dingy hole, to which I certainly could not have condemned a favourite dog; and had I kept any human being sleeping there, should have expected to be troubled with very uneasy dreams in my own comfortable nest up stairs. How servants kept there could be expected to be clean, honest, and sober, is one of the Irish mysteries, which I have not yet heard unravelled. I am quite sure that if I were condemned to live in such a hole myself, I should cease to care about cleanliness or comfort, and take every opportunity of alleviating my condition by any dainties or drink I could lay my hands on.

From this and other circumstances coming under my notice, I fear the generality of domestic servants are not liberally dealt with. I had opportunities in attending sales by auction, and in other ways, of inspecting the kitchens of several houses in many quarters of the city of Dublin, and was astounded at the bareness and discomfort, the want of furniture, and the air of shabbiness in the kitchens of houses even in the most fashionable streets—houses that had their splendidly-furnished drawing-rooms *en suite* on the first floor, and all other appliances for keeping up an aristocratic appearance.

I am, as a middle-class Englishman, accustomed to see the kitchen looked on as the centre and heart of the establishment—its cleanliness, its comfort, and its being furnished with all appliances and instruments for the wellbeing of the domestics, and for facilitating them in their endeavours to minister to the wants of their masters—considered as the primary necessities of a house. If I were compelled to choose between the two, I would rather have a well-furnished comfortable kitchen for the servants, and sit without a carpet in the parlour myself, than luxury in my own

rooms and aqualor below stairs; and I know this is no uncommon nor unusual feeling on our side of the Channel. Here is one point on which our Irish brothers entirely differ from us, and on which I need hardly say, the sooner they agree with us the better for themselves.

Let us take a walk into the country. What are all these great stone-walls, eight or ten feet high, lining the roads for miles, with great gates or doors at intervals? They look, at first sight, like a series of jails or lunatic asylums; but if we manage to get a peep through one of the big doors, we see a handsome house standing in ornamented grounds, and find that these secluded and fortified demesnes are the residences of the gentry. This is a feature common to the outskirts of most Irish towns, where we have often to go a long walk into the country before we can get a peep at it. A great number of the residences of the nobility and gentry in the country are similarly surrounded by huge walls, though now many may be seen pretty well dilapidated; and I trust they never may be repaired.

On my first visit to Killarney, I was shocked to find all approach to the lake, except along one dirty lane, barred by miles upon miles of wall, shutting out all view of the scenery, and enclosing the demesnes of the Herberts and the Lord Kenmares, and such-like people. One of the smaller of these estates—thus girdling with the cordon of aristocratic seclusion one of the most beautiful of earth's pictures, which I feel almost tempted to declare belongs of right to mankind in general, rather than to any man or set of men in particular—has luckily been obliged to be sold, and the mansion has been converted into a hotel. It is here only, and at the other older hotel, which is equally walled in, that we can, by paying for it, acquire a right to revel in the loveliness of nature, without asking any man's leave, or trespassing on any man's property.*

And now, since we have stumbled on the subject of Irish scenery, let me endeavour to correct one great mistake as to Ireland, which, like many others, has arisen from the fancies and imaginative expressions of Irish authors, and especially Irish poets. We constantly hear of Green Erin; but is the island really green in its external aspect? When I first visited Ireland, I expected to find the land as green and verdurous, even in the uncultivated parts, as England is, over by far the larger portion of the country. It was not till I had travelled over nearly all the length and breadth of the island, that I became fully convinced of the real state of the case. Brown heathery mountains, bare, cold bleak ridges and moorlands, meet the eye universally in all the higher parts of Ireland; while on the low lands and plains, great black, desolate-looking bogs and fens, are the most striking features of the scenery over miles upon miles of country. It is true, there are great exceptions. Some of the valleys—perhaps I may say all the valleys—of Ireland are lovely. Wherever we get a river valley bordered by high land, there we get all the greenness and fertility one could desire—rich meadows and beautiful woodlands; but still, these are the exceptions, and not the rule. In natural greenness and fertility (I am not now speaking of beauty of form or outline), Ireland must be compared to Wales or to Scotland—not to England, which is far superior to it. I am not making these remarks in any spirit of disparagement, or from any paltry feeling whatever, but simply from a desire to speak the truth. I love and admire Ireland, both the country and the people, for many of their qualities;

but those who flatter them are not their true friends. Nothing would be more beneficial for Ireland, in the present posture of affairs, than that the exact truth should be known about it. For instance, I have often seen and heard it wondered that Ireland should be in such a distressed position, notwithstanding its having so rich and fertile a soil, and such vast mineral wealth and resources. People are apt to imagine, that those who have great natural advantages, and do not make a better use of them, have only themselves to blame. Now, I deny both the natural fertility of the soil and the great mineral wealth. Ireland, speaking of it in the whole, and in its generally unimproved state, has rather poor soil, and is deficient in mineral wealth. It is true, she has some valuable tracts of both kinds; it is equally true, that what she has, has not been turned to the best account. The very first preliminary to making the most of them, is to estimate them at their true value; so that people who come to invest capital in them, in the hopes of making a profit, may not turn away offended at the evident exaggeration that has been used, and naturally conclude the whole to be a delusion and a snare. Much has been done lately to introduce the sheep; but there are already grounds to fear that the climate may prove too moist for the animal. Black-cattle will probably be found a safer article of husbandry.

I recollect seeing, some time back, in one of the Cork newspapers, an article giving an account of the visit of two Scotch farmers to the south of Ireland in search of land to be let. The writer was highly indignant at what he styled the insolence of these gentry, who had the assurance to offer only from 5s. to 10s. per acre for land. He worked himself into a patriotic furor on the occasion, and seemed almost to look on it in the light of a personal insult—expressing himself glad that the wretches had left the country without taking a farm. Now these men were doubtless men of business, who took up farming, as any other man takes up a trade or profession, with the intention of making a decent living by it for themselves and their families, and putting by a little profit for the future. They very likely offered a fair rent for the farms in question, a rent which they thought would enable them to live handsomely and put by money. The writer of the article never took into the account how much capital would have to be sunk in the farm before it could be brought into such a condition as would enable a good farmer to do this. It is not at all unusual in Scotland for farmers, on entering upon a nineteen years' lease, to spend a couple of thousand pounds on the land—all, of course, to be got back in time, leaving the farm vastly improved.

An Irish farm, especially in remote parts of the country, is one of the many things calculated to astonish an Englishman. It is, we will suppose, a tract of land of about fifty English acres, which is thought a rather large farm in Ireland. The fields are usually separated by banks of stone and earth (no hedgerow timber to encumber the land at all events), the banks being two or three feet wide at top, and often serving as causeways for a footpath to run along upon them. Gaps in these fences are frequent; and the gates usually consist of a pile of loose stones artistically built one over the other, so that a slight kick brings them all down at once. After removing some of the stones, a cart can be taken through the opening, and at some time or other the gate can be built up again. When stones are not abundant—though I hardly know where that is likely to be in Ireland—a gorse-bush, or the cart itself, or anything else that is handy, is made to do duty for a gate. A friend of mine once saw an Irish farmer coming home and *shutting* the principal gate of his establishment. It was done in this way: after taking the horse out of the shafts of the cart, it was wheeled into the opening, and the shafts rested on the

* A complaint of this kind may with equal justice apply to some parts of England and Scotland.—Ed.

bank on one side, the body stopping the principal part of the gap. The gap being a wide one, however, the cart did not reach across it; and then what was to be done? Proceeding apparently in the ordinary routine, the man fetched a stick of wood, with which he propped up the cart on one side, took off the wheel from that side, and then rolled it into the remainder of the gap, propping it against the bank and the cart, to which he fastened it by a piece of straw-rope. His gate was then complete till the cart was wanted again. How would an English or Scotch farmer relish such a gate as that?

Let us proceed, however, with the description of the farm. The fields are undrained, and for the most part unmanured, full of thistles and weeds, and the land usually out of all heart and condition. But the house! Sometimes the shell is tolerable—a pretty good stone house of two stories, with perhaps a slated roof; more frequently, however, there is only one story; and the walls are partly of mud, and the roof of thatch, all miserably dingy and out of repair. Even in the first case, an entire window would be a rarity—there are casements, some of whose panes are boarded up, and the rest half-stuffed with the wreck and ruin of old rags, with just two or three cracked panes remaining. Inside is neither floor nor pavement—nothing but the natural soil. I stop not to speak of the furniture, or rather of the absence of all furniture but perhaps one rickety table, one or two three-legged stools, a chair, and a large iron pot, with a bedstead or two full of rags that look like the very nest of all sorts of horrors and abominations. I speak not of the furniture, I say; that is the tenant's affair, and not the landlord's. But the outbuildings! In front of the house, with a few stones just giving a passage up to the door, is a square pit, the dung-heap, half full of mud and water, and the rest rotten straw, and what little manure can be scraped together. On one side or other is a set of wretched thatched sheds, all ruinous and dishevelled, the roof half fallen in, and the whole as rickety as a child's card-house. These are the barn, stables, cow-houses, and cart-houses. Perhaps, also, but rarely, there may be a pigsty. For a thrashing-floor, I have seen the upstairs part of a two-storied house used—the bedrooms, as we should call them; but which, as the only floor, is used to thrash on, and as the driest place, is used as the granary. In a one-storied house, the family often, in thrashing-time, give it wholly up for barn purposes, and sleep in the cow-house.

How strange that such practices should prevail in a country so near our shores, and subject to the same government! The truth, however, is, that the inhabitants of Ireland have for ages been exposed to a blundering policy, and left to deteriorate, or to be misdirected, according to circumstances. There cannot be the slightest doubt—at least, I have none in my own mind—that in the ancient and still continued abdication of duties by landlords, is the foundation of Irish misery. The blame is not radically with the people; for who work more diligently than the Irish when they are removed to a distant country, and have a fair prospect of remuneration? No! we say it advisedly, it is the landlords, who, by their systems of management, adverse to all sound principles of social polity, have long retarded improvement, and driven the people to despair.

No mistaken sentimentalism seems to exist among the hard-tilling peasantry. I have often heard them speak with great anxiety of their desire for an English gentleman to settle in their neighbourhood; and have always found among them the strongest expressions of kindness and good-will when they found I was an Englishman. Some echo of the English idea, 'a fair day's wage for a fair day's work,' seems to have reached their ears, and produced an impression on their hearts; and I am convinced that English justice, to

say nothing of generosity and benevolence, would find a cordial and delighted acceptance among them.

Let us turn for a moment from these graver topics, and take a look at an Irish fair, as seen from my windows the other day, in the square of a small country town, in the south-west of Ireland.

It was a pouring wet day; notwithstanding which, people began to come in about eight o'clock—one man with a cow, another with two or three sheep, another with a pig or two; and so on. They grouped themselves here and there about the market-place, seeming to expect the pigs and the sheep and the cattle to stand by them quietly, and be examined and sold as if they had an interest in the matter. The sheep and the cows really behaved very well on the occasion, the cows especially seeming to be on the most friendly terms with their masters, who walked about with one of the cow's horns under their arms, leading her by it, as if she were a lady. An intrusive cart, however, pushing into the throng, would every now and then cause some disturbance, making the cows restive, and causing them sometimes to shake their heads and brandish their horns in a way that seemed to cause much hazard to their masters' coats, if not to their ribs and muscles.

But the pigs were the worst. Such a concert of treble, tenor, and bass squeakings I never heard, even at the tuning of an orchestra! Every now and then, one of the pigs, taking a disgust at his situation, would make a dart into the thickest of the fair, with one or two men and half-a-dozen boys in pursuit of him, carrying terror and confusion in all directions; and when caught, his leg had to be tied with a straw-rope, and he had to be driven back to his position, causing a fresh confusion. One or two men would begin to bargain about a certain grave and respectable-looking pig, and after feeling him all over, it seemed to become necessary to examine his mouth, on which a united and unmanly assault would be committed upon piggy, which was seized by the legs and upset into the mud, knelt upon by two men, while a third thrust a handkerchief into his mouth, and seemed to be going to perform some dental operation on him. At all this, piggy complained loudly, and bewailed his ill-treatment in the bitterest and most discordant tones he could muster; till, the inspection being finished, he was allowed to rise, when he would probably sit up on his hinder-end—one side all white and clean, the other all plastered with mud—and look up at his master with an air of indignant remonstrance at his allowing him to be treated so.

I was delighted to find that there was no quarrelling or fighting at this fair—the bargaining, though often very vociferous, and accompanied by volleys of guttural Irish, was all good-humoured; and though some little shouting and singing was heard in the evening, there was no violent disturbance.

The whole fair, and the habits, appearance, manners, and language of the people, strongly reminded me of a Welsh fair—a resemblance I have frequently been struck with in Ireland, having resided some time in both countries. Another remarkable and cheering circumstance, was the number of whole great-coats among the men, and good cloaks among the women; so that it appeared that however badly off the labourers, there was still some means among the farmers. Let us hope that these may increase, and that by a change, whether in the laws or customs of the country, they may be induced to reform their domestic habits, and introduce something like cleanliness, decency, and comfort into their habitations.

[The above paper has been communicated by an English gentleman, who recently visited, and remained some time in Ireland. We trust that it will be read in England with interest, and in Ireland with both interest and profit. At least, we feel certain that the remarks of intelligent visitors, when conceived, as

these are, with good feeling, and expressed inoffensively, form one of the best means of correcting what is wrong in a country; and we hope that Ireland is not an exception to the rule, notwithstanding the soreness towards England which unfortunately exists.]

COLONEL THOMAS TALBOT.

THE death on the 5th of February last, at London on the Thames, county of Middlesex, in Upper or Western Canada, of the 'Great Colonel Talbot' of the British settlers, and the 'Big Chief' of the Indian tribes inhabiting the large expanse of territory clipped in by lakes Huron, Erie, and Ontario, closed one of the most remarkable careers recorded in the annals of private and peaceful enterprise. London, whither he had recently come from his residence on the shore of Lake Erie—to die as it proved—is about equidistant from the three inland seas just mentioned; and if you ascended balloon-wise two or three miles above it, and looked east, west, north, and south, you would see that that now populous and thriving town, with its wide-spreading streets, handsome public buildings, busy wharfs, and boat and barge crowded river, is but an oasis of civilization, so to speak, amidst a dense encircling forest—pierced through, indeed, with roads, and broken into large patches of cultivation, but still, in the main, presenting a wild, though hopeful aspect. But when Colonel Thomas Talbot, a quarter of a century before the first stone, or, more correctly, the first log of this Canadian London was laid, encountered the wilderness, and by his indomitable energy and perseverance, hewed therein the foundations of a magnificent province, the only human habitants of the unbroken forest were a few scattered tribes of Hurons and Chippewas; the only paths through its tangled, melancholy solitudes, those which the deer, the wild-cat, and the bear had made for themselves during the thousands of years it had been their dwelling-place. And Colonel Talbot, let us, moreover, premise, was no Nimrod. It was not in quest of objects of the chase he came there, but solely to subdue, reclaim, and cultivate the western forest of Canada, and locate himself therein permanently—a herculean task in those days, and scarcely possible under the circumstances, save by a man prompted and sustained by the hardening influences which the following narrative will shew to have, in the first years of his enterprise at all events, actuated Colonel Talbot.

He was born in June 1772, at the Castle of Malahide, county of Dublin, Ireland; and it was the frequent boast of the half-hermit dweller by Lake Erie, especially as garrulous old age grew upon him, that the barony of Malahide had been held by the Talbots in unbroken succession for six centuries; and that the English Talbots, who figured so conspicuously in the old wars with France, were of the same family-stock as the Talbots of Malahide. Unfortunately, he was not so rich in purse as in blood; and in 1793, being then in his twenty-second year, he found himself an unattached captain in the army, his present wealth little more than the half-pay of that military rank, and his future much depending upon the answer he should receive to an application he had made through Major Watson—a mutual friend—to be placed upon the staff of the newly-appointed governor of Upper Canada, Simcoe. He preferred going out to America to taking his chance in Europe, notwithstanding that the breaking out of the French war promised abundant employment to men of the sword; and for several reasons, one of which he himself imparted to Mrs Jameson after an experience of some forty years of forest-life. He had been early fascinated, he told that lady, by Charlevoix' description of *La Nouvelle France*—as Canada was called previous to its acquirement by Great Britain, at the peace of 1763—particularly his account of the 'paradise

of the Hurons' in the western province; 'and being resolved to get to Paradise as speedily as possible,' jocosely observed the colonel, 'I made up my mind to come over and settle here.' The paradise, however, which excited his youthful dreams, was not the solitary one which, so far as his own home was concerned, it subsequently proved to be. The pages of Charlevoix had been read by the light of other and brighter eyes than his own; and the gallant captain, when he at last received the appointment of aid-de-camp and military-secretary to Governor Simcoe, with the rank of major, in Canada, either deceived himself or was deceived into the belief, that if he could secure a few thousand of the fertile acres which the English government, in its anxiety to flank the lately severed American states with a loyal British population, were willing to dispose of upon the single condition of *bona fide* occupation—he might return to the Old World for a young bride, whose perennial smiles would of course suffice a thousand times over to dispel whatever of gloom or sadness might possibly, spite of Charlevoix' pictured pages, attach to a dwelling amidst the wild beauties of a Canadian wilderness.

In this hope or illusion, Major Talbot at all events embarked with the governor, in the spring of 1794; reached Montreal in safety, and soon afterwards entered upon the active duties of his appointment. Subsequently, he accompanied the governor in his exploration of the Huron territory, for the purpose of marking the sites and divisions of the townships, counties, cities, in Western Canada, towards which the tide of emigration should be directed, and, as far as practicable, confined, till its swelling volume could profitably overpass those limits. The site where London now stands, it was unanimously agreed, was a fitting location for the capital of the new province; the name of the British metropolis was at once conferred upon the area marked out of the forest by the notching and felling of a few trees, and the stream which flowed through it, named the Thames. It is unnecessary to go into further details of the official survey, it being sufficient to remark, that Major Talbot was not deterred by the actual sight of the promised paradise, from his resolution to make it his life dwelling-place; and that, in 1800, he returned, with the rank of Lieutenant-colonel, to England, for the several determined purposes of negotiating a grant from the crown of a tract of land which he had carefully surveyed near the central shore of Lake Erie, disposing of his commission, contracting marriage, and then immediately re-embarking with his wife for Canada. How it precisely happened we know not, but these last intentions remained unfulfilled; the lady, whether from fickleness of disposition, or a reasonable aversion to commence house-keeping or hut-keeping in an American forest, having preferred uniting herself with a gentleman of the class of mind and fortune who 'live at home at ease,' to sharing a Huron elysium with Colonel Talbot.

Happily, Lieutenant-colonel Talbot was by this time approaching his thirtieth year—a season of life when the heart will bear an immense deal of breaking without much danger of permanent damage; and he soon wisely resolved to banish from his man's memory all such trivial fond records, and bravely confront the wilderness alone. His commission was easily disposed of, and his suit at the Colonial Office was entirely successful—the sole condition insisted upon being the location, within a reasonable period, of one settler for every 200 acres. The land was in the nominal township of Dunwich, and was roughly guessed by the colonel to contain about 100,000 acres, more or less—a miscalculation, as it ultimately proved, when the partial clearing of the bewildering woods allowed the land to be more accurately measured—the area within the assigned limits being then found to comprise about 650,000 acres! This important matter finally adjusted, Colonel

Thomas Talbot embarked, early in 1803, for Canada, furnished, if not with a wife, with a large number of exceedingly useful aids for his proposed warfare with the forest—such as axes, saws, carpenters' tools of all sorts, agricultural implements, seeds, choice varieties of sheep and poultry, and a considerable sum in ready money. Safely arrived, the colonel lost no time in making his final preparations for his wild and desperate plunge—as his friends characterised the undertaking—into the pathless woods, which had just put on their gorgeous autumn dress as he left Montreal with a string of wagons, and thirty loggers, woodmen, and negro labourers. No woman accompanied the expedition—Colonel Thomas Talbot's recent experience having, no doubt, prejudiced him against that admirable moiety of the human race.

The spot—at nearly the centre of the north shore of Lake Erie—where this enterprising gentleman proposed to locate himself, was, at that time, fully 100 miles from any white man's dwelling, save across the lake to the United States, a distance of about seventy miles; and the difficulties, hardships, miseries, encountered, were of the most depressing and formidable kind. 'I am happy now,' remarked the aged colonel to Mrs Jameson, with a betraying sadness of tone; 'but if I had anticipated *one-half of the horrors* I actually went through, I should never have ventured upon the undertaking.' It was, in sooth, for many years a desperate battle for bare existence, far away from human ken, amidst the desolation of the wilderness, with cold, hunger, not unfrequently famine from the failure of crops, when life was only sustained by the chance products of the chase; and more than once Colonel Talbot was on the point of returning to the world he had too rashly abandoned in disgust. Pride, however, strengthened his manful resolution; and for upwards of fifteen years, little was heard in the far-off frontier towns of the adventurous band that had disappeared in the forest in 1803, except early in 1814, when the naval officer commanding the British force on the lakes, briefly reported that a party of Americans had gone on shore on the Canadian side of Lake Erie, and done some wanton damage at Colonel Talbot's clearing, by driving off his agricultural livestock. Those fifteen years, albeit, were years of prodigious and incessant exertion on the part of the isolated band of settlers, nearly one-third of whom died of disease, privation, and accident during that period. Colonel Talbot, usually attired in a blanket coat, and accoutred with an axe, worked as hard or harder than any one of the labourers in felling, logging, fencing, and planting his land, and was besides cook, dairyman, and baker to the entire party. His own residence—upon a lofty cliff overhanging Lake Erie, round which flows a rapid stream called Kettle Creek, that falls into the lake at Port Stanley—was at first an ordinary single-roomed log-house, where for many years he slept, like everybody else, on the bare ground; and it was gradually added to without much regard to symmetry, till, in the fulness of time, it became a huge aggregation of log-houses, affording accommodation to large numbers of sheep, pigs, and poultry, and sufficient dining and sleeping room for himself, one servant, and an occasional tourist-visitor or two. Even at the time of his death, the walls of the best apartments were still naked piles of logs, the furniture wooden benches and chairs, and the entrance-hall approached by a rude kind of veranda or covered porch, a granary piled with sacks of wheat, heaps of sheep-skins, Indian corn, pumpkins, &c. The home-farm comprised about 600 acres; and there was, besides, an orchard of twenty, and a well-cultivated garden, of about six acres, plentifully stocked with rose-trees.

These household luxuries were of course the work of time, and a very long time too; and, as before remarked, it was not till after the lapse of some fifteen years, that

definite tidings of the colonel and his doings reached Toronto and Montreal. By that time (1819), the European emigrative flood—loosened and impelled westward by the cessation of the giant wars, at length triumphantly wrestled down at Waterloo—only faint and doubtful echoes of which world hurly-burly had reached Colonel Talbot in his forest solitude—had begun to flow in fast increasing volume towards Upper Canada; and it was not long before the spray of its more advanced waves began to besprinkle plentifully 'Talbot Settlement,' thereafter to soon become 'Talbot Country.' The colonel's terms for the disposal of his lands, in 200-acre allotments, were—a money-payment, by easy instalments, of £125; the construction by the settler of a log-house 18 feet long, and a chain of road in front thereof; and the clearing and sowing of at least ten acres within three years, under pain of forfeiture. Settlers were also bound to accept the colonel as their lawgiver, judge, and priest—in the latter capacity, however, only in administering the rite of marriage, a duty which he had exclusively performed from the time he had been compelled, by the clamours of his dependents, to admit a limited number of treacherous Eves into his delightful paradise. This spiritual attribute, however, was speedily rebelled against by the colonel's new subjects; but his material arrangements were successfully enforced. One of these was, that the new log-houses should be built along the margin of the road or track leading from his own residence to the site marked out as the future London, a distance of about thirty miles, and now known as 'The Talbot Road.' The now flourishing and charmingly situated town of St Thomas, half-way between London and Port Talbot, was soon afterwards commenced; and the achievement of a great success, after a quarter of a century's doubtful struggle, was no longer problematical. No sooner was this distinctly perceived by the superior local authorities, which they did very clearly after the actual foundation of London in 1827, than they began to be exceedingly inquisitive as to the elastic powers of the colonel's grant, which, for 100,000 acres, as originally at all events intended, had stretched to nearly seven times that extent. Successive governors harassed the colonel terribly upon this matter; and he could only keep the crown-lawyers at bay—wrathfully determined as he was not to part with a single acre, if he could help it—by frequent appeals to the home-government. These were to a certain extent successful; but the colonel finding, in 1837, that the Canadian sons of Zeruiah were becoming too strong for him, came over to England, obtained a personal interview with the colonial secretary, and returned in triumph with an official order that he should be left in unmolested possession of his 650,000 acres.

Other influences, however, much more difficult to deal with than chief-secretaries or governors, were day by day depriving Colonel Talbot of the despotic chieftain-like authority which he so highly valued. The advancing population which crowded his well-chosen territory as fast as it could be cleared, and which the terms of his new patent forbade him to bar out, had he wished to do so, swept away the sort of feudal customs and observances he had set up, faster than they did the pine and maple trees and stumps with which it was dotted. St Thomas, the metropolis of his 'country,' rapidly expanded into an important town, with rival churches, chapels, newspapers, furious Blue and Orange parties; and finding himself more and more overlooked in the thronging crowds, as well as dwarfed politically by newer notoriety, who engrossed the public ear by eloquent expositions of true Blue and bright Orange politics, this founder of a magnificent province perforce laid down his dictatorship, and finally subsided into a highly-respectable wealthy Canadian country gentleman—his chief amusement for the last twenty years of his life

having been the cultivation of his garden, and an occasional gossip with a tourist from the old country touching the ancestral glories of the Talbots of Malahide—the raid upon his property in 1814 by the Americans—and the visit paid him in 1827 by three distinguished young Englishmen, the present Earl of Derby, Lord Wharcliffe, and Mr Labouchère. The fierce repugnance which he for many years displayed against any female invasion of his domestic stronghold, was at length vanquished by his old and faithful servant Jennings, who, having become utterly weary of celibacy, in a sudden fit of desperation married an Irish widow, whose husband had been not long before carried off by the ague. It was necessary to inform the colonel of this catastrophe, who, contenting himself with storming at Jennings for a fool, offered no active opposition to Mrs Jennings's coming home, and accepted the good dame's ministrations to his domestic comfort, at first with silent, and after a while with pleased acquiescence.

The best illustration of the life of this singular individual we can offer, is to be found in the contrastive aspects of Talbot Country as he found it in 1803, and now when it contains 28 townships, 150,000 cleared and cultivated acres, and numerous flourishing towns and villages, inhabited by a fast-increasing population of 50,000 souls.

THINGS TALKED OF IN LONDON.

June 1855.

DERBY DAY and the Dublin Exhibition have given our gossips a good deal to talk about, and helped newspapers to a few columns of information that were sure to find readers. Seeing that our legislators took a holiday to go to the race, we must of course look upon it as a national affair; and all the silly people who lost by betting on horseflesh, may console themselves in the fact, that fate overtook them under the eyes of parliament. The Exhibition may be regarded as a sign that the Irish are going to help themselves. Having brought together the products of their industry and the raw materials, and compared them with those of other nations, it will be their own fault in future if they do not seek to multiply and turn them to the best account, especially the valuable copper-mines lately discovered in Achil. What better stimulus can they need thereunto than the fact, that the Exhibition itself is due to the munificent enterprise of one of their own countrymen, who, a few years ago, was literally one of the labouring-classes? Those who will, may find in the career of William Dargan an encouragement to perseverance under any circumstances.

An official application has been made to the Treasury by the French government, inviting contributions of British manufactures for the Exposition which is to be held at Paris in 1855. Here may be another triumph for Peace. To bring things to light so that they can be seen, appears to be one of the tendencies of the time. Some private picture-galleries are again thrown open; and the purchase made at Kensington for the great National Institute, is in part already available to the public, for an Exhibition of Ornamental Art, and Choice Specimens of Cabinet-work, is now open at Gore House, once the residence of Lady Blessington, and afterwards the Symposium of M. Soyer. The necessity for actual observation as a part of education, as a means of cultivating thought, is becoming more and more apparent, and Glasgow and Sheffield have been holding a correspondence with the Board of Trade relative to the establishment of a Museum of Inventions in those towns. Trade is increasing, and it will not do for the traders to be found below the mark—besides remembering that *a lie has no legs*, whatever be its form, they must learn to manufacture according to the laws of true art. The aggregate tonnage of British vessels

employed in 1851 was 3,360,935 tons, and in 1852, 3,380,834 tons. With such a rate of growth, there will be no lack of ways and means. Steam-communication with Africa has widened our market: we now get steady supplies of oranges and pine-apples from the western coast.

The second course of lectures to working-men at the School of Mines has been as well attended as the first. There were more applicants for tickets than the rooms would hold. There is a sort of mania at present for lectures, just as there is for table-turning, and such like mystical phenomena. We have had lectures on poets and poetry, on satirical literature, and on the relations of different branches of art to each other; and so forth. It is, perhaps, a phase of that disposition which is seen in literature to popularise all subjects, and make them very easy, as shewn by the number of books put forth with apparently no other object than to waste time—so little do they contain to awaken thought or promote reflection. Mr Grote's *History of Greece*, which has just reached its eleventh volume, is an exception. Such a work proves that the spirit to write a great book is not yet dead, and we may accept it as a promise of more to come. For the present, the United States government declines to enter into a treaty for an international copyright; and so literary poachers, on both sides the Atlantic, may still exercise their predaceous propensities without fear of the law. Russia pursues another course: in that country, the duty on all books imported has just been doubled; and it excites a strange feeling in the present day to read, that Macaulay's *History*, the *Scripture Lessons* of the Irish Education Board, and *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, have all been entered on the pages of the *Index Expurgatorius*. The history of literature records many similar facts, and shews that such is not the way to put out the light.

There is talk of free libraries for rural districts, so as to admit of the books circulating through a group of villages. This plan has, to some extent, been carried out, as shewn by the Report of the Yorkshire Mechanics' Institute Union, but with indifferent success. The villagers, with few exceptions, will not read—they do not want to be enlightened; and, unless the Report belies them sadly, care for nothing but the grossest animal enjoyments. If it be hard work to convict adults of ignorance, the friends of education must devote themselves the more hopefully to the minds of the young. So far the free libraries in towns have prospered; but who would have thought that such places as Exeter and Birmingham would, in these days, have refused, by a large majority, to possess themselves with a free library and museum? Apart from what is doing in England, they may perhaps be induced to reconsider their vote, by the statement, in a recent communication from Valparaiso, that 'a free school had there been opened for the education of artisans, on the plan of the English schools, which promises to be of great service to the working-classes.'

There is a literary society of the employés on the Great Western Railway, which hitherto has proved itself useful, and continues to flourish. It was started in March 1852, with 113 members, and a library of 700 volumes. The books are now nearly doubled in number, and the members are increased to 175. Among other things, they are doubtless learning to estimate leisure hours at their full value—no unimportant item in education. Some idea of what is doing in the way of communicating knowledge, may be gathered from the statement, that, in 1851, we had 46,114 day-schools, with 2,144,372 scholars, being a proportion of 1 in 8·36 of the population; in 1818, it was 1 in 17·25. There are also 23,498 Sunday-schools, attended by 2,407,400 children. That good is being done, may be inferred from the fact, that the criminal offenders in England and Wales, in 1852, numbered 27,510, being 450 fewer than in 1851.

That enterprising lady, Madame Ida Pfeiffer, is still pursuing her travels in the Indian Archipelago. She has sent over an account of her visit to Sumatra and Java, written at Sourabaya in December last, and announces her intention of starting for the Moluccas and New Guinea. If successful in exploring the interior of the latter island, she will be the first European to accomplish the adventurous task. While so near China, a word may be said on the subject of the rebellion, which is giving rise to much earnest talk among our merchants. Nearly the whole of the southern half of the Celestial Empire is in the hands of the insurgents, who declare themselves bent on expelling the Tatar dynasty, and re-establishing a native line of kings. Tien-tih, their leader, is said to be a young man who a few years ago was a student at the American Mission in China; he speaks English, and his education will account for his allusion to the Hebrew Scriptures in his proclamations.

The astronomer-royal has published an able and emphatic paper in favour of the decimal system of coinage. The Geographical Society have given one of their gold medals to Mr F. Galton for his explorations in Southern Africa, and another to Captain Inglefield for his voyage to the Polar Seas. The latter award has excited much question, as to whether sailing to the top of Baffin's Bay and back be a sufficient claim for the golden distinction. There are other arctic navigators who have done much more than this. A project for a universal language is again talked about; and if it come to anything, a congress of philologists is to be held at Paris, to prepare an alphabet as the first measure. Such a scheme was talked about and written about some hundreds of years ago, but as yet we appear to be no nearer the desideratum. A Frenchman announces that he has found memoirs of Toussaint l'Ouverture, written by the negro monarch himself while shut up in the fortress of Joux, and in which he vindicates his character from the aspersions cast on it, and shews how mistaken were the views entertained of him by Bonaparte. Apart from other considerations, the work will be interesting when published as a production of African intellect—that is, provided the documents have not been manufactured. The world is not yet grown so virtuous as to make such a trick impossible.

Late news from Australia reveals the fact, that deaths have occurred in the streets of Melbourne from 'destitution and starvation.' Such a catastrophe might have been predicted in the face of so great an indiscriminate rush to the colony, and with bread at sixpence a mouthful. In pursuance of their wiser arrangement, the government have agreed to pay £1000 to the owners of the *Stratford*, a clipper bark, for the conveyance of the mails to Melbourne, Port Phillip, and Sydney, in eighty-two days. This is a grand improvement on the old method; and the more so, as steam appears to be hardly yet competent to a quick passage to the antipodes. Perhaps, before steam does it, one of the new powers, electro-magnetism or caloric, will have become formidable rivals. Some of our scientific men admit that both are possible; but the Civil Engineers have debated the point as regards caloric, and come to an unfavourable conclusion.

The corporation of the city of London is at last to be inquired into; government has appointed a commission for the purpose, and the Conscript Fathers will now have to give an account of themselves. It will be something to their credit, that for some weeks past the city streets have been cleaned once a day for five days of the week, and twice on Saturdays. Country-folk, for some twenty miles round London, are wondering whether the coal-tax will be repealed. The Thames sewer-system of drainage has been approved by the Admiralty, it having been their duty to see that the projected works offered no impediments to navigation. Thus, again, we have visions of an unpolluted river

flowing through London, though still in the remote future.

A paper has been read before the Asiatic Society, which contains matter to interest geologists and traders to the East Indies. It is on recent changes in the bed of the Ganges; and it appears that these are much greater than would generally be believed. Owing to the quantity of mud carried down, the wearing away of banks, and the shifting of channels, the route to Calcutta by the Hooghly will become impassable in the course of a few years, if the present rate of deposit be continued.

An interesting discovery in the Valley of the Nile has brought to light another of the stupendous monuments of ancient Egypt: it is a huge statue, and is supposed to be the owner of the gigantic fist in the British Museum. *Ex pede Herculem!* the biggest of the Ninevite bulls would appear a kitten by the side of this monster. He was met with while boring the strata in pursuance of Mr Horner's inquiry into the growth and formation of the banks of the Nile.—The Americans, too, have made interesting discoveries in running the boundary-line between the States and Mexico, which comprise ruins of edifices built by the aborigines at some very early period, and which, it is expected, will reveal somewhat more than is as yet known of their history. New trees, flowers, and plants were also met with: among the latter was the *pitahaya*, a cactus, which grows from forty to fifty feet in height, and from one to three feet in diameter. What a spectacle this would make among the vegetable wonders of the new Crystal Palace! The Horticultural Society are holding their annual flower-shows, with ever new proofs that nature is prepared to meet all the intelligent demands made on her vegetative resources. In various ways, they are helping on their own branch of science: they have published additional researches on the respiration of plants, on style and expression in certain trees and shrubs, and on new esculents and vegetables. A new method of making labels for plants has been introduced by Mr Bohn: at one end of a slip of paper, he prints the name of the plant or tree, and at the other, the colour of the flower or other description. These are then folded, and pasted back to back, and cast inside a flat tube of glass, and thus a perfectly legible and imperishable label is formed, at a 'cost of not more than 1½d. each—paper, print, and glass included.' The chemistry of vegetation is attracting much attention, and it is expected that the results of some highly important experiments will shortly be made public.

The Zoological Society have extended their dominion to the ocean, and added to the attractions of their gardens by a vivarium, in which are exhibited living specimens of algæ and other marine plants, together with crustacea, echinoderms, polyps, mollusks, cirripeds, and such-like creatures from the British seas. The cistern in which all these are exhibited has glass sides, so that they can be distinctly seen and studied by those who may wish to examine what have hitherto been secrets of the deep. It may be new to some persons to know, that it is almost as easy to establish a vivarium in a drawing-room as a glazed case of plants.*

The observatories at Greenwich and Cambridge have been interchanging electric-time signals as an experiment in determining longitudes: we shall soon know whether the difference between the two is the same by the new process as by the old; and then it may be repeated over greater distances. Mr Fox Talbot has succeeded in producing what may be called photographic engravings. He coats a steel-plate with a solution of bichromate of potash in gelatine, and when dry, lays upon it a sprig of grass, a frond of fern, a slip of muslin, or any other object which admits of

* See *The Parlour Aquarium* in No. 445.

being copied. It is then exposed to light in the usual way, and washed in water, which removes all the parts covered by the figure; and afterwards is passed through a solution of bichlorate of platinum, which effects the biting-in, and so produces the engraving. The plate is then ready to be printed from; the impressions come off with surprising truth and delicacy; and according to the pleasure of the operator, they can be made to appear hatched, or of a uniform tint.

There is talk of a new west-end club, the fees and regulations of which are to be such as will suit individuals of moderate income: there is room for such an establishment, if it can really be managed on common-sense principles, and without any admixture of snobbery or flunkeyism. And last, the camp at Chobham, where 10,000 soldiers are to take lessons in camp-life, and familiarise themselves with campaigning in a peaceful way, will be a great attraction to sight-seers, and a stirring subject of talk for some weeks to come.

WESTMANN ISLANDS.

The Westmann Islands—Icelandic, *Vestmannaeyjar*—were settled by a colony of Irish slaves in 875, one year after the first settlement of Iceland. A Norwegian pirate cruising in the Atlantic came upon the coast of Ireland, landed, and captured forty or fifty persons, men, women, and children, and carried them off as slaves. Before he got home, they rose on their captors, slew them, and went ashore at the first land they met. This was on the largest of the Westmann Islands, that name being given them by the Icelanders, as these people came from the West. Christianity went here with these people, and to this day crosses, croziers, and other articles of a like nature, are dug up on the islands, which were undoubtedly carried here by the first settlers. The islands are fourteen in number, but only four of them produce any vegetation or pasturage, and of these only one is inhabited. This is very appropriately called Heimay or Home Island. It is fifteen miles from the coast, and forty-five from Hecla. On this island is a harbour partly encircled by a high perpendicular rock. Here they land, and embark in boats. A precipitous path leads to the top of the island, where the people, with their habitations, a few sheds, and their little church, remain 2000 feet above the ocean. The islands are basaltic, like Fingal's Cave and the Giant's Causeway; but instead of being 100 or 200 feet in height, rise like immense columns, nearly half a mile above the sea. The inhabitants draw their entire subsistence from the ocean and the cliffs, catching codfish and killing sea-birds, myriads of which haunt the rocks of their sea-girt shores. The sea-fowls furnish them feathers; some sorts are used for food, and some for fuel. They split them open, dry them, and then burn them, feathers and all.—*Wanderings in Iceland, in the American Courier.*

PLASTER OF PARIS.

The largest gypsum-field in the world lies about 300 miles west of Fort Smith, Arkansas, in the plains explored by Captain Marcy last year, extending over an area of 300 miles north and south, east and west. The strata in some places are twenty feet thick, of the purest kind,

white, and in some instances transparent. There is a sufficient quantity of it to supply the whole world, and would employ a railway in its transportation 100 years.—*Newspaper paragraph.*

A SPIRIT PRESENT.

If from that strange and unknown sphere
Where I believe thou art—
The world which girls round this our world,
So near, yet so apart—
Thy soul's soft call unto my soul
Electrical could reach,
And mortal with immortal blend
In one familiar speech—
What wouldst thou say to me? would ask
Of all that chanced between?
Or close this chasm of cruel years
With spirit hand serene?
Wouldst love me—thy pure eyes seeing all
God only saw beside?
Oh, love me! 'Twas so hard to live,
So easy to have died!
If, while the dizzy whirl of life
A moment pausing stayed,
I face to face with thee could stand,
I would not be afraid:
Not though from sphere to sphere thy feet
In glad ascent have trod,
While mine took through earth's miry ways
Their melancholy road.
We could not lose each other. World
On world, piled ever higher,
Would part like banked clouds, lightning-cleft
By our two souls' desire.
Life never severed us: death tried—
But could not: Love's voice fine
Called luring through the dark—then ceased,
And I am wholly thine.

REPOSITORY OF TRACTS.

Inquiries have been made by various persons, whether the cheap publication lately commenced, under the title of CHAMBERS'S REPOSITORY OF INSTRUCTIVE AND AMUSING TRACTS, is a re-issue of the MISCELLANY OF TRACTS, published a few years ago. It therefore becomes necessary to state, that the REPOSITORY is an entirely new work; it resembles the MISCELLANY only in size and price: the matter is new, and prepared on purpose. A Number appears every week, a Part every month, and a Volume, neatly done up for the pocket, at the end of every two months. Four volumes (i.e. each) have now appeared.

The Nineteenth Volume of CHAMBERS'S POCKET MISCELLANY, price 6d., is now published. Of this work, designed as a Literary Companion for the Railway, the Fireside, or the Bush, a volume appears every month, and may be had of all Booksellers.

The present number of the Journal completes the Nineteenth Volume (new series), for which a title-page and index have been prepared, and may be had of the publishers and their agents.

END OF NINETEENTH VOLUME.

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